MEASURES

ADOPTED IN BOSTON,

MASSACHUSETTS,

FOR THE

RELIEF

OF THE

SUFFERING SCOTCH

AND

IRISH.

BOSTON, N. E.
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REPORT.

The intelligence of the prevailing famine in Ireland, has been received with universal sympathy, throughout the United States of America. The sensibility of the whole country was awakened, by the thought of thousands of fellow beings perishing for want of food. It was the spontaneous impulse of the country, to hasten to transmit to the sufferers, a share, of that abundant supply of the fruits of the earth, which a kind Providence, with more than ordinary bounty, had vouchsafed the last season to the People of the United States.

As soon as the accounts from Ireland, placing it beyond doubt that the distress was general and urgent, had circulated widely throughout the country, measures of relief were proposed simultaneously in the principal cities of the Union. A meeting of members of Congress, and other individuals of influence was called at Washington, at which the subject was presented in the most striking light by several leading Senators and Representatives. An Appeal to the People of the United States was issued by direction of this meeting, and a circular letter was addressed to the Committees in the principal cities.

On the receipt of this communication by the Mayor of Boston, steps were immediately taken for holding a public meeting of the citizens. The invitation for that purpose was numerously subscribed, and an overflowing assembly was held in Faneuil Hall, on the evening of the 18th of February.

The Mayor on taking the chair, addressed the meeting,

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and resolutions appropriate to the occasion were introduced by J. T. Stevenson, Esq., and supported by himself, Dr. Howe and Mr. Everett, in addresses which gave utterance to the emotions of Christian benevolence and sympathy that pervaded the assembly.

The Committees appointed to collect subscriptions immediately entered upon the discharge of their duties. The reports of the Sub-committees have not all been returned; but it is certain that about Fifty thousand dollars have been subscribed in the city of Boston, and an equal amount in the New England States.

While these steps have been in progress in Boston, similar movements have taken place generally throughout the country. Contributions have been made in the churches, subscription papers circulated, and funds to a large amount have been collected. On no former occasion of this kind, it is believed, has so deep and general a feeling been manifested.

A wish was entertained by many members of Congress, that an Appropriation should be made from the Treasury of the United States, in aid of an object which the whole People of the Union had so deeply at heart. Resolutions for that purpose were brought forward in both houses of Congress. Doubts however were entertained by some members of the competency of Congress to make such an Appropriation of the public funds; —Considerations of delicacy influenced others;—And the proposed Appropriations accordingly failed; but a joint Resolution passed the two houses requesting the Secretary of the Navy to place two of the Public Vessels at the service of the Committees, which might wish in this way to transport to Ireland a portion of the supplies furnished by private benevolence, for the Relief of the sufferers.

One of these vessels the Jamestown, under the command of R. B. Forbes, Esq., of Boston, who has liberally

offered his services for that purpose, and whose active and disinterested exertions are entitled to the highest commendation, is now in the harbor of Boston, loaded with provisions for Ireland.

It would be unjust on this occasion not to allude to the generous contributions made by the Irish residents and emigrants in the United States for the relief of their distressed countrymen at home. Although the emigrants are for the most part men in humble circumstances, supporting themselves by the labor of their hands, the sums saved from their hard earnings and remitted to Ireland since the prevalence of the famine there, have been very great, but form no part of the sums collected by this Committee.

The great and immediate object aimed at, has of course been the relief of actual want. After this, the hope has been entertained, that the kindly feelings called out and expressed on this occasion would exert a happy influence on the relations of the two great kindred countries. The vessel which conveys the first offering of the sympathy of the people of Boston and its vicinity, bears the name of the spot where the first settlers from England established themselves on the American soil. She carries we trust a not unwelcome practical assurance that in laying the foundation of the American States, the Parent Country did but commence the establishment of another branch of the great Brotherhood of Christian Love. To strengthen this assurance, the foregoing brief note has been drawn up to be conveyed by the Jamestown to our friends in Ireland, and with the same end in view, the proceedings at the meeting in Faneuil Hall as reported in the Boston Journal are herewith subjoined.

For the Committee of Relief,

JOSIAH QUINCY, Jr., *Chairman.*

Boston, March 27, 1847.

MEETING IN FANEUIL HALL.

A meeting to devise measures for the relief of the people of Ireland and Scotland, now suffering all the horrors of famine, was held in Faneuil Hall on Thursday Evening, February 18, 1847,—which betokened the deep and heartfelt sympathy of thousands of citizens of Boston for their suffering brethren in foreign lands.

At the appointed hour, the meeting was called to order by Moses Grant, Esq., and proceeded to organise by the choice of His Honor the Mayor, Josiah Quincy, Jr., as Chairman of the meeting. Mr. Quincy on taking the Chair thus addressed the audience :

"This meeting has been called to take into consideration the present state and the future prospects of the people of Scotland and Ireland, and to decide what should be done by the citizens of Boston for their relief. As to their present state, it is unnecessary to harrow up the feelings of the audience by the repetition of the scenes of horror that have been described in the pages of the daily press. But as to the future, we must remember that it is yet six months to the harvest, and that the distress great as it is at present, may be but the precursor to that which

will be much greater. In such a state of things it is natural to desire to do something, and it is the duty in an especial manner for a community whose prosperity is increased by the calamities of others, to do much for their assistance. The question is, what can be done? The vastness of the demand almost paralyzes the power of action. But great as the amount of suffering is, much may actually be effected; and more can be done by exciting hope and energy in the sufferers. We are told that despair broods over every countenance—that even the seed corn on which the next harvest depends, has been consumed in reckless desperation. The inhabitant of Ireland is like the sailor swimming for his life, who as he surmounts billow after billow, catches at intervals the glimpse of the distant beacon that tells him there is land in sight, though his sinking heart and failing arm warn him that he shall never reach it. Your aid will inspire him with the renewed confidence that such a mariner would feel if he saw the life-boat dashing through the surf to his assistance.

But the call for this charity is not confined to its recipients. It is emphatically "twice blessed, it blesses him that gives and him that takes." There is hardly a more beautiful sight recorded on the pages of history, than to see that country, which once imported corn from the old world, returning it again for its support. It again realizes the description of Burke, "That the child of their old age, with more than a filial piety, or Roman charity, put the full breast of her youthful exuberance to the mouth of her exhausted parent."

But the scene is more than beautiful, it is sublime. A nation hastening to the rescue of a nation. There have been times when conquerors took advantage of the exhaustion of famine, to subjugate their neighbors by adding the horrors of war to those of want. But how much nobler the sight, to see in the capital of our

nation, the second officer in the government aided by a Senator or Representative from every State in the Union—calculating, not as they did a short time ago, the power possessed by this country to war against and injure England—but how we might assist her in feeding her starving children. An act like this must excite a corresponding feeling. If as enemies they hungered and we fed them, we should heap coals of fire upon their heads. How much more will those feelings be excited when there is no enmity or animosity to overcome. If the wild Arab is forever the friend of him of whose bread he has eaten—how much more shall Christian England appreciate our aid.

But there is another view which, as sons of the Puritans, it is well to consider. Drawing their knowledge from the pages of history, and the early records of our religion, they believed that national sins, unless followed by repentance and atonement, must be followed by national misery. The dispensation founded on sacrifice has passed. But may we not hope that this free-will offering of a great people, rising as it will from the mountains of the North, from the prairies of the West, from the savannas of the South, from the sands of the ocean, from the borders of the lake, from the margin of the rivers, from every valley and from every hill-side throughout our vast republic, will be an accepted sacrifice, and this act of a nation's charity be the harbinger of a day foretold in prophecy—"When nation shall no longer lift up the sword against nation," when connected by the modern facilities of intercourse, and bound together by mutual kindness and Christian charity, the kingdoms of the world shall be united in the ties of universal peace and brotherhood, and love."

The meeting was then further organized by the choice of the following officers:

PRESIDENT,

Hon. JOSIAH QUINCY, Jr.

VICE PRESIDENTS,

Abbott Lawrence, Thomas H. Perkins,
Nathaniel Greene, Simon G. Shipley.
W. J. Hubbard,

SECRETARIES,

Lewis W. Tappan, Marcus Morton, Jr.

J. T. Stevenson of this city then came forward and prefaced a series of Resolutions, as follows:

Fellow Citizens:—I am permitted to offer the business resolutions for the consideration of this meeting, which has been called together here, where all love to meet, by no organized committee, but by the cries of a starving people. We all know the very general sympathy which is swelling in the hearts of our fellow citizens. That is plain to all of us in our daily walks.

But the present is a case which individual efforts cannot reach. It is a case in which each man, however ready he may be, cannot be his own almoner. It requires concerted action, or that sympathy must waste itself in expressions of good will. The kindest words will not feed the hungry.

The voice of distress has come to us from a foreign shore, but not in a foreign tongue, and the assembly here to-night gives assurance, if any such were needed, that the response to it from the City of Three Hills, will be no empty echo—that the tumult of the ocean, which is rolling between the sufferers and us, is not loud enough to drown that voice—that the mountain waves are not high enough to impede the current of international good-will.

The Resolutions, which will be offered, have for their

whole object, the furnishing the method for embodying the feeling which prevails, into action. It is concerted action that is wanted—and that action must be prompt. Delay in such a case is cruelty.

We want money—and Boston's offering should be large—so large as to be a worthy acknowledgment of the blessings we enjoy.

We want the contribution to the present purpose to be general throughout our city—and unless this meeting afford the opportunity for that, it will fail to come up to the kindly feeling which pervades the community. This meeting should furnish the opportunity to all to do just what their hearts are prompting them to. It should furnish to the merchants the point, where they may cast some of their bread upon the waters of that deep, every track of which is whitened by the sails of their richly-laden ships. It should give the manufacturer, who is even now picturing to himself the frenzy with which the mother's prayer is offered up that her own children may die rather than that they should no longer bear the pangs of starvation, a channel through which he may follow his own heart's impulses. It should open to the mechanics, who in the pride of their independence here are pained by the despair which they know is painted—no, not painted, but engraved—on the face of many a father, as he realizes that his once strong arm has no longer the power to carry food to his famishing family, the path by which he may obey this call of Christian charity and universal love.

This meeting should open for these, and for all, a channel of communication between those who are suffering there, and those who sympathize with them here. Once opened, such a channel would be filled, as by a flood, from the various contributions which will pour into it from the lowly places, as well as from the high places of the land.

None can object to the objects of this meeting. If any think that in distress of such appalling magnitude, all which Boston can do, will be but as a drop in the bucket, they are mistaken in the fact. Boston can do good for thousands.

If any one whispers that charity should begin at home —acknowledge the truth of the proverb, but remind him that there is no such Boston proverb as that it should *end* at home.

If any fear that contributions for this purpose will detract from the aid that should be proffered to the suffering poor, within our own borders—tell them *no*—not one iota; the charitable offerings of very few reach the limit of their ability, and it is the opened hand that continues to give.

If any one doubt his Christian duty in this matter, towards those whom he has never known and never will, let him reflect that the blessings which will tremble from the lips which he supplies, will be invoked from the same God to whom he is offering up thanks for the supply of all his wants.

In this belief that the feeling of our fellow citizens is all right, and that all that is wanting is the machinery for its exercise, I will move these Resolutions, which will supply that deficiency.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, That the present distress of the people of Ireland and Scotland makes an urgent appeal to the sympathy of the humane of all nations, that it is the Christian duty as it will be the acknowledged pleasure of those whom God has blessed with the means of doing good, to adopt prompt measures for contributing to their relief; that an opportunity should be offered to allow fellow citizens to do what they may for this object, and therefore

Resolved, That six persons be appointed to be an Executive Committee, to collect subscriptions and to take all necessary steps to carry out the objects of this meeting.

Resolved, That a Committee of four from each Ward be appointed to aid the Executive Committee in raising money by a general collection throughout the city.

Mr. Stevenson was followed by Dr. Samuel G. Howe, who riveted the attention of his audience, while he addressed them as follows:

Mr. Chairman:—You have happily reminded us of the pleasing contrast between the present feelings of this country towards England, and those which existed a short time ago, during the negotiations about Oregon. But no where, sir, can the contrast be seen more strikingly than within these hallowed walls this very night,—for, in the olden time, our fathers gathered together here to devise measures for breaking the political union with Great Britain, while we come here to find means to strengthen the bonds of Christian union with her, and to show the sympathy, and the love we bear to those of our brethren who still dwell in our mother land.

I hail this event as a sign of the dawning of that happy day whose meridian fulness shall show peace on earth and good will to men.

The beautiful words of Him who said "it is more blessed to give than to receive" have been verified by thousands of individuals in every age, until their truth has became an axiom in morals; but, like other words of the same great Teacher, they have not yet been developed in half their extent and their truth; nations have yet to learn, what so many individuals have already learned, that it is better to act from generous than from selfish motives,—that it is better to love than to hate,—that it is better to help than to fight.

God is ever bringing real and permanent good out of apparent and transient evil, and if the grievous dispensation with which He is now visiting Ireland, and Scotland, and Belgium, shall teach the nations that there is more true glory,—more real pleasure,—more lasting advantage in striving to excel each other in deeds of charity than in feats of arms, then will this dispensation have been for good, and not for evil.

But we have not come together to speculate upon the moral effect of passing events; we have come here to act;—the cry of distress has reached our ears from across the Atlantic, and we have hurried up to this place to answer the cry, and to succor the distress.

The great danger is that our people may be daunted by the magnitude of the evil. It is not a fire, it is not a flood, it is not an earthquake, whose ravages we are called upon to repair—it is a famine—a grievous famine,—affecting not merely hundreds, or thousands, but millions. The heart sickens at the thought of the dreadful sufferings of the starving poor, and the mind is appalled by the apparent impossibility of alleviating them. But, there is all the more need of courage, and, when we look at our resources, we can feel it. Boston has at least 20,000 families, and there is not one of those families that would not engage to support a fellow being a whole year rather than have him perish by hunger upon their door step. Fellow citizens, let us imagine that the starving Scotch and Irish are lying pale, and haggard, and perishing upon our very door steps, and let us resolve that each of us will take charge of one of the poor creatures, and will keep him alive at least one year. Boston and her immediate neighborhood can send 15,000 barrels of flour, or the representative of them in cash, and these will keep 15,000 people alive until the next harvest. Let the rest of the country, and the rest of the Anglo Saxon race do as much in proportion to their means, and, with God's

blessing, we will keep the monster famine at bay in Scotland and Ireland, for a while at least.

My friends, there is a great virtue in a barrel of flour; it is the most effectual form into which you can put a prayer for a starving fellow creature. You assent, I see,—and yet, do not know that virtue—because you do not know what hunger really is. None who have not been out of this country, and very few who have been abroad, have had any real experience of what hunger is.

I can tell you something about it, because I have been among a people who were perishing with hunger, as the Irish and Scotch now are, and it was my good fortune to witness the effects of the distribution of the supplies of corn meal, which were sent out from this country, and to know how like an enchanter's wand, hunger changed that poor meal into a gorgeous feast. I refer to Greece.

War of the most ferocious and ruthless kind had ravaged the land for years; the villages had been burned, the towns destroyed, the olive trees cut down, the vines pulled up, and the inhabitants had fled to the mountains for safety.

I was in the mountains when some of the provisions were landed upon the shores of the Peloponessus, and went to superintend their distribution. The poor, half naked, half famished wretches came trooping down from their hiding places—ten, twenty, thirty miles distance—and tremblingly held out their hands, their caps or their bags. Happy was the family that got a barrel of corn meal! and grateful to my ears were the blessings they showered upon my countrymen. I have known them, where fire and cooking materials were not at hand, to moisten the kiln-dried meal with water, and eat it raw. I can answer for it, that when dried in the sun, it made a palatable cake, as you would have found it, if you had been living as we sometimes did upon sorrel and snails, dished up without salt or pepper.

Well, these provisions were of immense use—for they not only put food into the stomach, but courage into the hearts of the Greeks; and so would your supplies to the Scotch and Irish do.

Let me assure you, that when famine invades a land, all its horrors are increased by the demoralizing effects of fear; it is fear which makes the body yield quickly to the pestilence which follows famine; fear freezes up all the small streams of neighborly love and charity; fear makes him who has a little bread refuse it to a dying neighbor, lest perchance his own wife or child should be dying for want of it to-morrow.

Those who know much of practical charity know that its best sources are not in the purses of the rich; the charities of the rich flow in a few large streams, and are seen of men, while the charities of the middling classes, and of the poor themselves, are ever silently descending like the dews of heaven, and spreading their refreshing influence around them. The mite of the poor, given as it is with his hearty sympathy to his fellow poor, is magnified into greater proportions than the treasures which the rich throw down from their high places.

Now, in the time of famine among the Greeks, all these sources of charity were dried up by fear; and the effect of the American contributions was to open them again; nor can we doubt that the effect would be the same in Scotland and Ireland.

Men will take courage and hope; they will see that help is at hand; and those who have a little will give to those who have none.

But let us not look to the remote effects, let us try to relieve the present evil. Let us not be daunted by its magnitude,—let us not speculate about its origin—let us not stop to ask whether, if we relieve the suffering now, it will not be just as bad next year; the sufferers are like men drowning before our eyes,—let us save them

now, and if they fall in again, why, we will pull them out again, if we can. Let us not ask what others are going to do; let not the credit of our city be our motive, but let us just do all that we possibly can. Finally, let it not be done for show; and let it not be done as charity. There is no charity about it;—it is a sacred debt of humanity; let us pay it,—principal and interest; and, of whatever else the world may accuse us, let them have no chance to accuse us of repudiating that.

The Hon. Edward Everett next addressed the meeting. The announcement of his name was greeting with enthusiastic cheers.

I rise, Mr. Chairman, at your invitation, to unite with the gentlemen who have addressed the meeting with such ability, in recommending the passage of the resolutions. I scarce know in what manner to express myself on the occasion. The general topics of remark which suggest themselves have been exhausted by yourself, sir, and the gentlemen who have already spoken. I am unwilling, I may say I should be ashamed to think, that any labored argument or any studied words of persuasion were necessary, to convince an assembly of the citizens of Boston of the duty, or to awaken in them the desire, of speeding relief to the sufferers by famine in Ireland. If it be our only object to lay the most important facts of the case before those who have not particularly turned their attention to the subject, the task is not without difficulty. Since I received the invitation of the committee, the evening before the last, to attend this meeting, I have looked over the newspapers received by the last steamer from Liverpool, and I find it hard to make a selection from the painful accounts with which their columns are filled. Mere general statistics do not answer the purpose. We read of the large proportion of the population deprived of their accustomed food; of the numbers who offer

themselves for labor on the public works, beyond the utmost power of the official agents to employ them; of the numbers, still more wretched, who knock at the doors of the alms-houses, and find them closed; of the reputed numbers even of those who perish by starvation, or the diseases produced by scanty and unwholesome food. All these matters, stated in general terms, fail to bring the dreadful reality of things with sufficient vividness to our minds. If we seek to go further, and attempt to repeat the horrid details of striking cases of destitution and suffering, we are in danger of plunging into scenes too dreadful to be recited in public. "Of all the maladies," says the great master of English eloquence, to whom you, sir, have referred, "which beset and waylay the life of man, this plague of hunger comes the nearest to the human heart; and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is. But I find myself unable," he adds, "to manage it with decorum. These details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting; they are so degrading to the sufferer and the hearer; they are so humiliating to human nature itself, that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and leave it to your general conceptions."

Mr. Chairman, it is universally known that there are above two millions of people in Ireland who subsist almost exclusively on potatoes. It is scarcely necessary to say that, in the very best of times and under prosperous circumstances, they live on the borders of starvation. What is looked upon as plenty by this part of the Irish population, would be regarded by us as little better than famine. There is nothing to fall back upon, in case of hard times; no retrenchment in the quantity, no reduction in the quality, no substitution of cheaper articles. They already live upon the smallest quantity of the cheapest food; and I have been told that it is a practice to eat the

potatoes under boiled, because in that condition, they will lie longer in the stomach, and thus delude its craving emptiness. Two disastrous seasons have, in some parts of the country almost wholly, in others altogether, cut off the accustomed scant supply of this, the cheapest article of food; and the alarming question is how is the want to be supplied; how are the horrors of general starvation to be staved off? To which question I can only answer, Heaven knows. It must be, I fear, a more sagacious person than any in this assembly, who can return a satisfactory answer. The wisest heads in England and Ireland seem confounded at the extent of the evil. The government has contrived a very extensive scheme of employment on public works, which seems to have had but partial success;—in fact, such is the infirmity of human counsel, to have been productive of some positive evils of a serious nature. At any rate, it is plain, that to employ two millions of people, or indeed any considerable portion of them, of a sudden, in an unaccustomed way, by public authority, must be a very dangerous experiment upon the regular march of industry; and if it were otherwise, what are the unemployed to do? Nay, what are the employed to do with their pittance of wages, in districts where there is little or no food; where what little there is, can be bought only, at what is called with dreadful significance, a famine price?

The natural and necessary consequence of this state of things is that death—death by starvation,—is now a common event—is daily happening. The plague having done its work on the lower animals, has fallen on man. The cow of the small farmer, all important as she is to his family, has perished or been killed; the pig, the poultry of the cottier have in like manner died for want of food, or been killed to eke out a few days' miserable sustenance to their famished owner,—the watch dog has been drowned (and the poor peasant who has perhaps no other

living being he can call friend, had almost as lief drown a child,)—every wretched substitute for wholesome food, bark, roots, apple parings, turnip skins have been exhausted, and now famine in all its horrors stalks through the land. To what actual extent the work of death had gone at the last accounts, it is not easy to say. There is unavoidable over-estimate in the first reports of such general calamities. I hold in my hand an extract from the proceedings of a large meeting of the nobility and gentry of Ireland, held at Dublin on the 14th of January, which is the latest authentic statement I have seen; and I find one of the gentlemen who spoke, using this language, "that five thousand had already perished by want and by disease; fever had made its appearance in many parts, and was daily cutting off the people by hundreds. The sole cause was want of food." Mr. O'Connell at the same meeting, or on some other recent similar occasion, is reported to have said, that three hundred were dying daily; and as far as I have been able to form an opinion, by running my eye over the provincial accounts transferred to the London papers, I should think that one death daily from every neighborhood in the South and West of Ireland, was not an extravagant estimate. If this be so, Mr. O'Connell's statement is quite within the bounds of the dreadful reality.

Then, Mr. Chairman, as you have well remarked, these accounts come down to the end of the year, at farthest to the middle of January. Six or seven long months are yet to pass, before any harvest of grain can ripen and be reaped. What is to carry the people of Ireland through these dismal months, in which famine, despair and death will be doing their work on a population already driven to the verge of madness. It cannot but be that the demoralization already commenced will go on. In the nature of things, due care to make ready the land for the coming season will be neglected. Seed corn and seed

potatoes, as you have observed, where they exist will be consumed for food. Outrages on property, under the spur of this sharp necessity, will take place. Those who have a little will hoard; those who have nothing will plunder. In the midst of frightful want there will be still more frightful waste; till, in the action and re-action of these physical and moral causes, there is great reason to fear that the frame-work of society, none too well compacted in this unhappy country, will wholly break down, and that horrors will be acted out in Ireland, in the course of the ensuing Spring and Summer, for which language has no adequate terms of description. God grant it may be otherwise, and nothing can do so much to prevent these forebodings from being realized, as to show to the people of Ireland, in the most effectual manner, that the eyes of a sympathising world are upon them; but I do fear, Sir, if not checked by some such genial influence, that the fertile plains and lovely vallies of this unhappy country will be the theatre before long of woes and horrors which it sickens one but to think of it.

And now, Mr. Chairman, we have come to consult together what we can do to contribute toward the mitigation of this great calamity; or rather to encourage each other to do the utmost, in his power. What little I thought to say on this topic, has been anticipated by the gentlemen (Mr. Stevenson and Dr. Howe) who have already addressed you with such feeling and pertinence. It is true that no individual, no community even, can do much to relieve the sum total of this mighty calamity; but every community, every individual, can do something, and the aggregate of these somethings is to form, sir, for months, the only stay of famishing millions. Don't tell me we can do but little, when the *little* that we and others can do is the *all* of a starving country. And this I will say, sir, that there is no community on earth that can do more than this; I mean that there is not another of its

size, embracing a wider extent of prosperity. The glorious sun in the heavens, that looks down on the misery of famishing Ireland, does not, in his wide circuit, shine upon a spot more abounding, in proportion to its size, with the physical comforts of life, and therefore better able to minister of its surplus to the relief of that misery. I shall therefore be surprised—I shall be deeply grieved—if on the list of contributions for the mitigation of this truly appalling calamity, the name of any place shall, in proportion to its numbers, stand higher than that of Boston. Indeed, I have no fears that it will be so. If I unhappily am disappointed, I shall at least hope, Mr. Chairman, that not much will be hereafter said of what we have been willing to regard as the proverbial liberality of Boston.

Liberality, sir! I am almost ashamed to use the word at all on this occasion. The liberality of giving from your abundance, to save the lives of men, women, and children, who to all intents, as was so well said by the eloquent gentleman (Dr. Howe) who preceded me, are starving upon your door-step! If we call this liberality, I should like to know what we should consider a duty. I rejoice to believe that I speak in the hearing of those, who regard the work in which we now engage, as one of duty, and that of the most imperative kind;—a duty so high and sacred, that could we neglect it, I should almost expect that the walls of these massy warehouses, filled almost to bursting with every article of food which enters largely into commerce, would fall and crush us as we passed.

You carried our minds, Mr. Mayor, by an interesting allusion to the distant East. There is a dark tale in the traditions of a less distant foreign land, which has haunted my recollection, in reference to some of the sad details of the suffering which prevails in Ireland, as I have seen them in the English papers. It is hardly appropriate to the business character of this meeting, but I have not

been able to get away from it. An Italian nobleman in the middle ages, fell into the power of his enemy, he and several children,—who threw them into a prison, and after long confinement, determined to starve them to death. The door of the dungeon was locked and the key thrown into the Arno. Thus much I believe is matter of history. The secrets of that prison house are known only as they were revealed to the imagination of Dante. After the first day passed without food, the father too well foreboding the doom that awaited them, a dear child, his little Anselm, plaintively asks the cause of his gloomy silence. Another and another day passes and still no food. The parent, not so much from hunger as in frenzy, gnaws his own hands. His children, duteous even in that dire extremity, supposing that the pangs of starvation were more keenly felt by their father than by themselves, implore him, instead of devouring his own limbs, to feed on them, and thus take back the wretched flesh with which he had clothed them. On the fourth day, Gaddo crawls to his wretched parent's feet, and feebly crying, "My father, why do you not help me?" dies.

This piteous tale, embalmed in the tears of five centuries, is no longer a remote poetic vision. It is, in all the substantial features, a horrid reality, passing within a fortnight's sail of us. There is not an inch of terra firma, sir, between the city over which you preside and the scene of these woes. They are taking place not in a solitary instance, but in hundreds; not within the walls of a dungeon, amidst the fury of civil wars, in a benighted age, but within open doors, by the way side, beneath the blue sky, in the face of heaven and of men,—in the nineteenth century; in this all-daring, all-achieving, all-boasting nineteenth century; and astonished Europe and astonished America stand looking on, paralysed as it were by the extent of the calamity. But paralysed, I trust, sir, but for a moment. A spirit of Christian charity has been

awakened on both sides of the water, worthy of the occasion; and well I know that Faneuil Hall is not the spot where it will burn with the least fervor. Let me only beseech you, what you do, to do quickly. It is a fearful thought that, do what you will, not a barrel of flour, purchased with the funds provided this evening, can be laid down within the Cove of Cork under six weeks, at the very soonest, taking the average chances of sailing vessels at this season. Before it gets there, the man—the family, which it might have saved, has perished. Yes, sir, while I fill your your ears with these empty words, some of our poor fellow Christians in Ireland have starved to death!

A vote was then taken, the resolutions were unanimously adopted; and, the following gentlemen selected as the Executive Committee:

Messrs. JOSIAH QUINCY, Jr.,
JAMES K. MILLS,
DAVID HENSHAW,
PATRICK T. JACKSON,
G. W. CROCKETT,
J. INGERSOLL BOWDITCH,
THOMAS LEE.

And the Meeting then adjourned.

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